

Applic. No. 10/717,415  
Amdt. dated August 31, 2007  
Reply to Office action of June 19, 2007

Remarks/Arguments:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-8 and 10-12 remain in the application. Claims 1 and 6 have been amended. Claim 9 is being cancelled herewith.

In item 2 on page 2 of the above-identified Office action, the drawings have been objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a).

More specifically, the Examiner has stated that the vacuum pump recited in claim 1 must be shown or cancelled from the claims. As stated above, Fig. 2 has been amended to include a vacuum pump "64". Furthermore, since the Examiner did not comment to the contrary, it is assumed that the amendment to the specification in the amendment dated November 17, 2006, has been entered. Accordingly, the specification as amended above to include reference symbol 65 is based on the prior amendment.

Should the Examiner find any further objectionable items, counsel would appreciate a telephone call during which the matter may be resolved.

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In item 3 on page 3 of the Office action, claims 1-12 have been rejected as being fully anticipated by Helmstädter et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,038,976) (hereinafter "Helmstädter") under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

The rejection has been noted and the claims have been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application. The claims are patentable for the reasons set forth below. Support for the changes is found in original claim 7 and on page 9, lines 1-12 of the specification together with Fig. 5 of the instant application.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 calls for, *inter alia*:

the valves being closed by a force from a mechanical actuator applied by the mechanical actuator physically contacting the respective piston rod.

On pages 8 and 9 of the Office action, the Examiner acknowledges that Helmstädter does not disclose physical contact or engagement, as is the case with the mechanical actuator 56 and the piston rod 53 of the instant application.

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As is now the case in amended claims 1 and 6 it is recited that the mechanical actuator applies the force by physically contacting the piston rod.

Helmstädter also explicitly discloses that the valves are switched pneumatically (column 9, lines 31-32).

As seen from the above-given remarks, the reference does not show the valves being closed by a force from a mechanical actuator applied by the mechanical actuator physically contacting the respective piston rod, as recited in claim 1 of the instant application.

Since claim 1 is allowable over Helmstädter, dependent claims 2-5 are allowable over Helmstädter as well.

The following further remarks pertain to claim 6.

Claim 6 calls for, *inter alia*:

a mechanical actuator for closing the valves with a force applied by the mechanical actuator physically contacting the respective piston rod.

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As seen from the above-given remarks, the reference does not show a mechanical actuator for closing the valves with a force applied by the mechanical actuator physically contacting the respective piston rod, as recited in claim 6 of the instant application.

Since claim 6 is believed to be allowable over Helmstädter, dependent claims 7-8 and 10-12 are believed to be allowable over Helmstädter as well.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 or 6. Claims 1 and 6 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claims 1 or 6, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-8 and 10-12 are solicited.

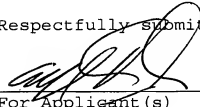
In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel respectfully requests a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

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If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition  
for extension is herewith made.

Please charge any other fees which might be due with respect  
to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner  
Greenberg Stemer LLP, No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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For Applicant(s)

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August 31, 2007

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